Welcome to the second issue of PITUS Update. We will bring you regular updates on the progress of the Pathology Information Terminology and Units Standardisation (PITUS) project through this newsletter.

Terminology and information standards on RCPA's new website

There is a brand new RCPA Website. The Pathology Terminology and Information Standardisation web pages have been expanded, go to:

http://www.rcpa.edu.au/Library/Practising-Pathology/PTIS

For more information on the PITUS Project go to:
http://www.rcpa.edu.au/Library/Practising-Pathology/PTIS/PITUS

To download The RCPA Australian Pathology Units and Terminology — Standards and Guidelines, (APUTS) and the associated reference sets and information models go to:
http://www.rcpa.edu.au/Library/Practising-Pathology/PTIS/APUTS-Downloads

Latest news on the PITUS Project

Steering Committee
Chaired by A/Prof Michael Legg
The PITUS Steering Committee had its first meeting on 27 June 2013. A detailed project plan was reviewed and agreed with tasks allocated to the Steering Committee and 5 working groups. All working groups have been meeting since July 2013 and are working diligently on their plans and deliverables.

The Steering Committee has established communication links to key stakeholders, i.e. with NEHTA, RACGP, RACP, all Pathology industry bodies and associations, Medical Software Industry and Standards Australia, and has promoted the activities of PITUS and its artefacts through conference presentations, newsletters and journal articles.

In early September invitations were issued for expressions of interest by consortia to join the PITUS implementation sub-project. The invitation went to Fellows, all member organisations of the Pathology Associations Council and the other organisations working with us on the PITUS Project. Four consortia have been assembled and contracts are being finalised for a start in February with the first phase evaluation of implementation to be complete by the end of May.

Standards Implementation (Wg1)
Chaired by A/Prof Michael Legg
Working Group 1 completed their first deliverable as planned which was to design an agreed APUTS implementation project and evaluation process allowing a grant to be paid on its success. The grant was made possible by Commonwealth funding aimed at encouraging uptake of standards and the project design was a model of co-operation between the MSIA — Medical Software Industry Association (Dr Vince McCauley) and NEHTA (Roger Hewitt).

This Statement of Requirements was subsequently incorporated into the Invitation to Apply for the PITUS Systems Vendor Implementation Grant which was approved by the Steering Committee at its August meeting.

The next task for Working Group 1 will be to monitor the implementations and in conjunction with MSIA to review the testing of the standardisation of requesting and reporting for each of the four consortia.

Request Modelling and Terminology (Wg2)
Chaired by Dr Lawrie Bott
This working group has been under taking two streams of work. The first is reviewing and further developing the terminology used for requesting pathology, the second is developing an information model for requesting genetic tests.

To aid in the expansion and refinement of the request reference set, the RCPA QAP has completed a comparison of the list of tests covered by their QA programs with the APUTS Request reference set. The gaps identified are now to be addressed with the aim of having total coverage. From the list, a further 158 tests that have been mapped to SNOMED-CT-AU codes. Beginning in February 2014 a sub-group led by Dr Bott will review the draft mapping.

Having terminology available to request all of the tests covered under the QA program means that it would be possible when other systems are in place to have electronic requesting and reporting of QA testing. This opens opportunities for improvement in both analytical and informatics quality assurance.

Professors Leslie Burnett and Frank Bowling are leading a sub group which is specifically working on Genetics requesting and an appropriate request information model to facilitate this. A number of meetings have taken place and the intention is to

provide a proposal for discussion amongst those most closely involved in the near future.

Safety in Pathology Reporting (Wg3)
Chaired by Dr Janney Wale

This working group has members from the RCPA, AACB, RACGP, MSIA and Consumers to work on elements of report rendering where variation has led to concerns about safety. The Group has systematically worked through alternatives in the area of cumulative reporting in pathology reports. As a result, draft recommendations and guidelines for the rendering of the cumulative reports are progressively being developed with the intention of offering them for public comment.

A survey was developed to assist in the gathering of information about the current reporting practice in Australian Pathology Laboratories. With the assistance of the RCPA QAP, the survey was sent to all Chemical Pathology, Haematology and Coagulation departments in Australia.

There was a strong response to the invitation with 114 completed surveys received by the cut-off. The PITUS team would like to thank all those laboratories who responded. The responses to the survey and the examples of reports received that were also sent will provide valuable assistance as we formulate the recommendations and guidelines for report rendering.

As you would be aware there is wide variation in the way that a cumulative report can be shown. The PITUS working group has evaluated each of the features considered to have safety implications, and documented views on the pros and cons with regard to safety and readability for each of the parameters that can vary. The resulting work has been integrated into a second survey that will be directed to those who receive and read pathology reports. In particular Dr Trina Gregory and Dr Rob Hosking from the RACGP have provided valuable input on issues and requirements and helped with engagement of GPs, the biggest cohort of pathology customers.

The significance of this standardisation work has been recognised during the development of architecture and standards to allow pathology reports to be included in the PCEHR. With the potential for many more reports from different laboratories being compared it is crucial to improve the reliability and ease of reading and interpretation. This it is believed can only be done by standardising critical elements of the layout of printed or electronic reports. There is a high level of concern through experience that different layouts can lead to clinical errors from misreading.

Michael Legg will present the key objectives of the PITUS project and proposed recommendations to the RACGP e-Health committee meeting in early March 2014. This will be followed by a second survey to gain feedback from RACGP, RCPA, Pathology Associations, RACP and other specialists on preferred layouts for safety.

Harmonisation (Wg4)
Chaired by Jill Tate

Working Group 4 are working closely with the AACB to develop guidelines for the representation and rendering of values provided for guidance on reports, as well as on issues such as significant figures, decimal places, related comments and flagging.

It is clear there are some pathology tests for which it is both inappropriate and unsafe to combine results between laboratories and/or over time on a cumulative report. Wg4 are working closely with AACB on further developing the flagging system developed to indicate when it is unsafe to combine and directly compare chemistry tests over time or from different laboratories.

Wg4 also developed three ways of conveying this information in OBX fields of the HL7 message and submitted a proposal to the Australia Standards IT-014-06-05 committee. During the November meeting of IT-014-06-05 the preferred option from PITUS was discussed and agreed. Consequently a process for the use of OBX-17 is being drafted into the revision of AS4700.2 which is currently underway.

Wg4 will make recommendations to the College and, if agreed, publish the guidance values (reference ranges) for the analytes where the AACB has achieved consensus on harmonisation. We currently expect around ten analytes to have completed this process this year.

Reporting Modelling (Wg5)
Co-chaired by Drs David Ellis and Vitali Sintchenko

Variation in reporting to registries is an issue for both pathology practices and the registries. The outline of a white-paper has been developed and is being tested with various stakeholders including cancer and communicable diseases registries. The next step is for an outline to be presented to the RCPA Board for feedback.

The working group is also developing standards for report modelling for Salmonella Infection, and will join forces with the RCPA Structured Reporting Project to look at Gastric Cancer and Thyroid Cytology. A comprehensive archetype for Gastric Cancer has been developed and is in the process of being tested now. Drs David Ellis, Vitali Sintchenko and David Papadimos are taking the lead on different aspects of this work.

Recent Publications

A paper was invited by the editors of a special edition of Clinica Chimica Acta on harmonisation.

Michael Legg (2013) *Standardisation of test requesting and reporting for the electronic health record.*
Clinica Chimica Acta (This is in press and on-line now)